

# Never Again — What?

## A Comment

[Jett Rucker](#)

Germany, October 1938. It's almost kick-off time for the Holocaust, which most of its fans date from the night of November 9, the infamous Kristallnacht "national pogrom" against Jewish synagogues, shops, and some homes. But less well known among devotees of the lore of *Kristallnacht* is the chain of events that was initiated by ... Poland.

Upon the annexation of Austria by (Nazi) Germany, Poland's government took alarm at the prospect that many of the Polish Jews then living in Vienna would flee the Nazis and return to their country of origin. The Sejm passed a law in March 1938 providing that the citizenship of expatriate Poles would lapse when they had been outside Poland for five years continuously. A return to Poland would suffice to "start the clock" over again. On October 6, the Polish government announced that this law would take effect (retrospectively) on October 29. There were at the time some 56,000 Polish Jews in the German Reich (see <http://tinyurl.com/33xz53h>).

By October 28, the German police had rounded up some 18,000 of these Polish Jews then residing within its borders and transported them to the Polish border, for them to return to Poland. But the Poles refused to allow these holders of Polish passports freedom of movement within Poland, instantly giving rise to refugee camps along the German-Polish border at several locations, most-notably at a small village known as Zbaszyn (<http://tinyurl.com/2auztrt>). These first concentration camps for Jews were Polish, not German. Poles imprisoned Polish Jews in Poland.

Flash forward, now, to 2010, to France, a member, with Romania and Bulgaria since 2007, of the European Union. The 300 or more encampments are in France, and they contain Romas (gypsies), most of whom hold Romanian and Bulgarian passports. They aren't confined in the camps, except to the extent that they would be charged fees to establish their customary mobile dwellings (trailers, or "caravans") elsewhere in facilities designed and licensed for such use. One reason such fees are so onerous for them is that French law still prohibits most employment to Romanians and Bulgarians, despite their citizens' right to travel and live in France under provisions of the EU, and French employers are in most cases apparently averse to employing Roma in any case (as are Bulgarian and Romanian employers, too)..

Pursuant to publicized policies of the Ministry of the Interior, French authorities have launched a campaign to clear the camps of their occupants and persuade them to return to the countries of their origin. In scenes reminiscent of the famous Israeli use of bulldozers on Bedouin settlements, the French authorities have razed and removed whatever remains of illegal Roma encampments after their evacuation.

While both the 1938 and 2010 actions involve use of the police for the inevitable recalcitrants, France employs a device not known to have been used by their German predecessors: they *pay* the Roma to return to their places of legal domicile—the €300 per adult evidently suffices to provide some incentive, along with a free ride in a passenger jet rather than a train. Fear does the rest, according to some Roma who have taken the money, returned to the east, and wish now to resume residence in France. For their

part, Romania and Bulgaria do not appear to use force to retain returning Roma in any particular place(s), although accusations by Amnesty International suggest that oppression may be more palpable on those returning to Kosovo, most of whom come from Germany (<http://tinyurl.com/33x6puu>).

Another of the many differences between the situation this century vis-à-vis the previous is that while the Nazi regime in Germany no doubt sought at least occasionally to please German constituencies, the regime of Nicolas Sarkozy in France remains subject to fairly open and free elections (in which, as it happens, such Roma as are in France at the time are completely entitled to vote). Regardless of whether the Nazis' actions of 72 years ago were popular with most Germans, the French enterprise is necessarily aimed at bolstering the electoral fortunes of the party now in power.

Sarkozy himself is the child of a Hungarian father and a mother of Jewish descent. In Hungary quite recently, following on the recent passage of a law criminalizing "Holocaust denial," a further law criminalizing the denial of Roma criminality (no, that is not a typo—see <http://tinyurl.com/2gyqsf9>) has been proposed before the national legislature. In any case, Jews and Roma were concurrently rounded up, deported, and put in many of the very same concentration camps by the Germans in the twentieth century. While this might be seen as giving the two groups common cause, or cause for hatred of Germans, it has turned out more to occasion competition between the two groups for the spoils of retribution—mention in monuments to atrocities, reparations payments, and the like. As yet, the Roma have not chosen any territory anywhere to serve as their "ancestral homeland," as Israel does the Jews. How about Bangladesh? Bangladesh is quite as uninhabited today as Palestine was in the years before 1948, and the Roma genotype indicates origins in that desolate region.

European Union Justice Commissioner Viviane Reding availed herself of the rich trove of the Nazi legacy in comparing the expulsions of Roma with the wartime deportation of Jews by Nazi-puppet Vichy France to concentration camps, neglecting to note that these deportations were not of French Jews but of Jewish refugees from Germany and countries further east that the Germans at that time occupied. In this, the deportations bore a closer resemblance to the Twenty-First-Century campaign, but their intended destinations were explicitly German-run concentration camps, rather than the mere repatriation intended by the Germans in 1938 and the French in 2010. Reding's analogy is apt, but the 1938 instance compares more closely.

And the analogy with what in retrospect has been characterized as the beginning of the Holocaust is close indeed. Is a reprise of the Holocaust—whatever it actually was—at hand, in some of the same countries, this time with victims whose resemblance to the Jews of 1938 goes little further than their tending not to interbreed with their non-Roma neighbors? While critics of the Jews tended to cite their sharp practices in business, in some cases actual crime—but always white-collar crime—critics of the Roma tend to cite their thievery and propensity to burglarize. Neither group has received much accusation of violence, but while the Roma arouse distaste with their apparent poverty, Jews tended to arouse envy in Germany and elsewhere because of their apparent prosperity. Above all, the Jews had wealthy and influential contingents in rich and powerful countries like the United Kingdom, the United States and, yes, France, to take up cries such as "JUDEA DECLARES WAR ON GERMANY" with which to threaten the Nazis as soon as they took power in 1933.

Is it time now for Judea to declare war on France? The main organization so far to take up the cause of the Roma is Amnesty International, an organization in very bad odor with Zionists in recent years for its similar work on behalf of the Palestinian victims of Israel.

Meantime, the world today enjoys an abundance of well-funded (and well-connected) organizations such as the Simon Wiesenthal Center that have dedicated themselves, in many cases in as many words, to "never again" a genocide such as they allege befell the Jews (and only the Jews) at the hands of the Nazis in the 1940s. Have we heard from any of these outfits? I am unable to fetch up reports of any such "speaking up" for the Romas, despite the fact that one of the perpetrators of atrocities against them is their old bugbear, Germany. Abe Foxman, where are you when members of some other tribe might have need of your critical pronouncements? Are you too preoccupied with zoning disputes in lower Manhattan these days to see a new Holocaust looming on the horizon? What about Elie Wiesel? He says he's from Romania, and France is where he finally hit the big time. Has he now lapsed back into the silence he's written and said so much about?

Perhaps we should consider the never-spoken words that may come after the familiar incantation, "never again" as we hear it from the many Jewish organizations that mouth it while seeking donations. Never again, *what*? Never again a genocide directed against Jews? Never again a law disadvantaging Jews? Never again a private act unfavorable to any Jew, anywhere? Never again a public word, by anyone, anywhere, that might in some way be interpreted unflatteringly as to anyone who might be or have been a Jew?

We need to think about what follows "never again," and to consider what that implies regarding the claim it makes upon our consciences, the sweat of our brows, and the blood of our youth.

Especially given that, based on what can be observed to this moment, it applies only to the Chosen of God, and to no one else, however much their situation may otherwise be the same.

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